

**Lyddington Manor History Society  
Historic Building Survey**

**4 Church Lane  
Lyddington, Rutland**

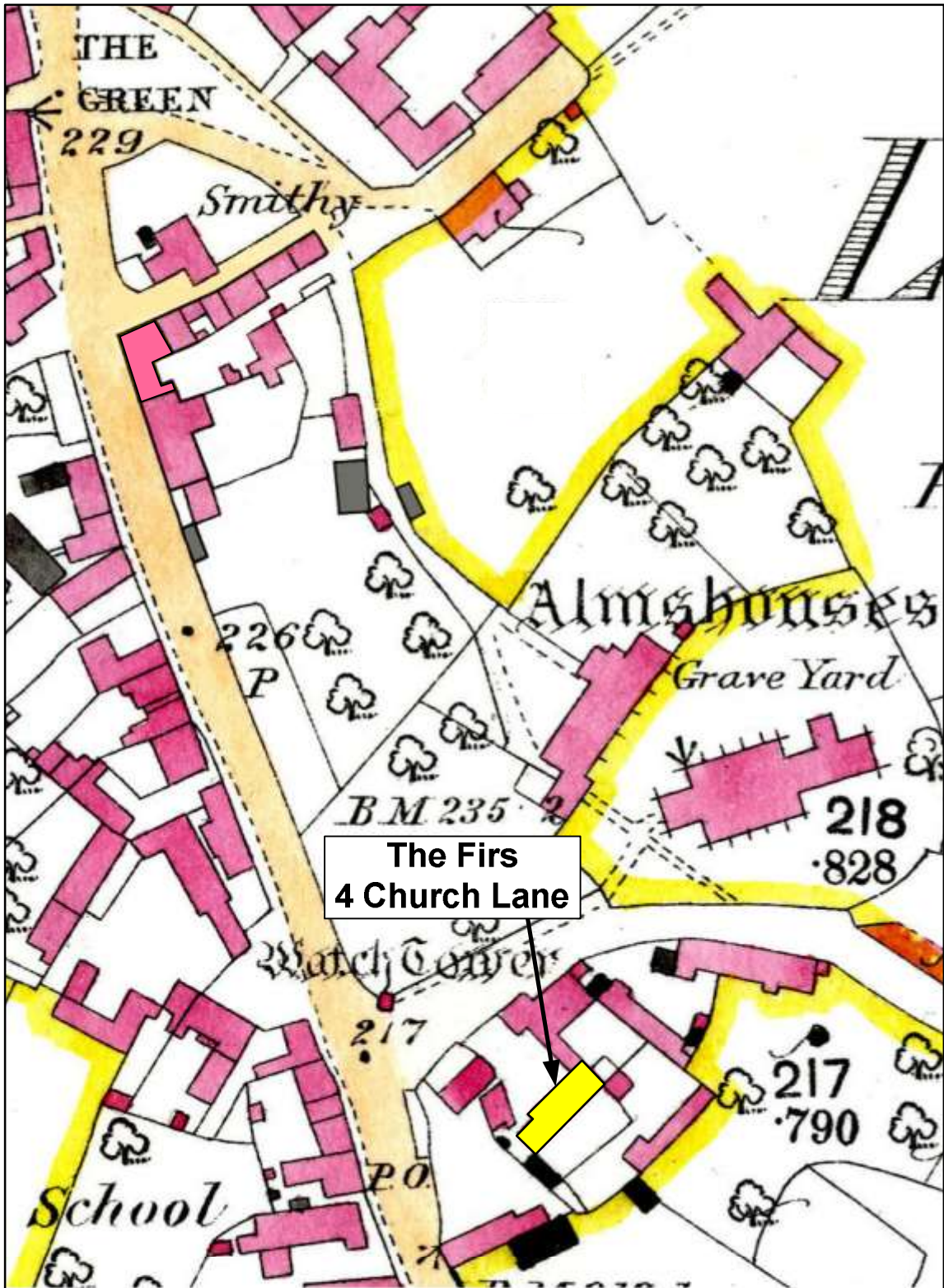


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Location Map – The Firs, 4 Church Lane, Lyddington  
(OS First Edition 1886)

## 4 CHURCH LANE, LYDDINGTON, RUTLAND

18/10/07

### Summary

This house was originally a three bay cruck building, dating from the later 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The central truss, which stood in the middle of a two-bay open hall, is one of the best quality surviving cruck frames in the area. Evidence indicates that the original external walls were built of stone or mud, not of timber. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the open hall was floored in and a large inglenook fireplace replaced the medieval open hearth. This fireplace makes use of a moulded and decorated beam, probably taken from the Bedehouse. Above the stone-built inglenook, the chimney was of timber and daub, not masonry.

OS ref: SK875969

### The cruck building

There is evidence for a cruck building of three bays, with a 2-bay open hall to the west and a further bay to the east. There is one surviving cruck truss, at the centre of the 2-bay hall. Surviving ridge or purlin timbers indicate the other bays, but there are no visible remains of further cruck trusses. The original timbers are all smoke-blackened from the hearth of the original open hall. Sooting is heaviest around the central truss, and is much lighter to the eastern bay, which was probably separated to some extent from the open hall.

The central cruck truss is of unusually high quality for the area. It was originally an open truss, as the arch braces show, but was later (probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) infilled with nailed oak studs and daub. The truss has blades of sawn, halved oak, with a cranked angle on the visible inner side of the blades, rather than a curving profile. It is unclear if the outer side of the blades was similarly cranked; it may have been more curving or irregular, as the north blade has a section with a large surviving knot which projects outwards. The slightly cambered collar is tenoned and pegged to the blades, rather than the usual local method of a dovetail lap joint. There are good arch braces with long pegged tenons, forming a very well-shaped arch, slightly pointed at the apex. Arch braces in cruck trusses are rare in the area, particularly of such well-shaped quality. At the apex is a deep yoke, into which the blades are tenoned, which is the normal apex type in the area.

The blades, arch braces and collar are chamfered, with a run-out stop just above the blade angle and a mitred chamfer junction at the blade/collar and apex joints. There is a large scribed carpenter's mark 'I' with a long 'tag' on the west face of the north blade and brace, but no other carpenter's marks were seen. The 'I' mark probably signifies that this was truss number one; the missing truss to the east would be truss two, probably the only other cruck truss in the building. The 'tag' signifies the left or right side of the truss. The blades also have long scribed marks just above the angle, which are probably setting-out marks. As often, the blades disappear into the masonry walls at first floor level and are either buried in the wall thickness or lost at lower level. It is probable that, like other local examples, the blades originally extended to near ground level, within the stone/mud walls.

The ridge is of well-cut rectangular oak, c.190mm high by 150mm wide, pegged down onto the yoke. The ridge survives in the east and west bays, but is missing in most of the central bay. A section of ridge projecting into the central bay from the east shows the ridge had splayed scarf joints, with under-squinted butts, large face pegs and no trait-de-Jupiter tabling. There is another splayed scarf joint at the central truss. The ridge has a shaped top and pegholes for early rafters. At the west end the ridge bears onto the stone gable wall. The end is irregularly shaped, suggesting a cut-off branch, and no peg holes are visible for fixing to another yoke. This perhaps suggests that the original gable wall may have been of stone, rather than a gable cruck truss. At the east gable, the ridge is much decayed and bears onto a later inserted corbelled chimneystack.

An original, sooted purlin survives on the north side of the central bay, and there is another cut off section to the south-west corner of the east bay. The purlin is c.200x150mm and unchamfered, and seems to sit directly on the back of the blade, without trenching, though this detail could not be fully seen. The purlins to the west bay appear unsooted and probably not original, though the straight-splayed scarfed junctions at the central truss seem convincing. On either side of the central truss are two surviving original rafters of squared oak, c.150x70mm, laid flat. They have survived as part of the later timber smoke hood. The south rafter has an unusual large peg through its top face halfway between the ridge and purlin; it is possible this could be the fixing of an original smoke louvre.

The front north and west gable walls of the house are unusually thick, at around 850mm. Although much re-faced, this probably indicates the original wall thickness, and suggests that the original walls were not timber-framed but of stone, or possibly mud. The carpenter's mark 'I' on the central truss may also indicate that there was no gable truss to its west, in which case it might have been marked 'II'. If there was no cruck truss in the gable, it does seem more likely that the gable was of stone, as mud would not be very stable for a pointed gable wall.

It seems the original cruck building was of three bays, with a good 2-bay hall to the west. As the 'face' side of the central truss is to the west, the 'high' end with the dais table would be at the west end. There was probably a cross passage within the hall at its east end, and the third bay formed the service end. The cruck truss dividing the hall from the service end is missing, replaced by a later stone crosswall and chimneystack. One would expect this truss to have formed a closed partition, though smoke was still able to pass along at high level, as indicated by the lesser sooting on the ridge of the east bay. The original building cannot be dated closely, but the features suggest a date of c.1450-1530.

## **The later building**

### External features

The front north wall is built of ironstone rubble. The central and west sections have rather irregular rubble and only rubble quoins to the north-west corner, though the east bay has been re-faced with larger blocks and good brownstone quoins to the

north-east corner. The window and door openings have 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century chamfered timber lintels. The eaves has been raised in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with brickwork covered by render. The west gable is largely covered by a 19<sup>th</sup> century extension, and the upper gable is rendered.

The rear south wall and east gable are of a different character, with alternating courses of limestone and ironstone, and with good limestone quoins to the south-east and south-west.. These walls are only c.540mm thick and have clearly been completely replaced, probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The south wall has a chamfered plinth, mainly of ironstone. Window openings to the south wall have large limestone jambs, perhaps re-used, and timber lintels. The eastern chimneystack is of good 17<sup>th</sup> century type, with a single flue of limestone ashlar with a chamfered plinth, torus/flat string course and cavetto/cyma cornice. The western chimneystack is of similar profile but of 20<sup>th</sup> century cast stone. The roof is of concrete tiles. Windows are of casement type, originally 19<sup>th</sup> century with some 20<sup>th</sup> century replacements.

The western 19<sup>th</sup> century extension is of ironstone to the north front and rendered brickwork to the rear, with a Welsh slate roof.

### Internal features

The 17<sup>th</sup> century alterations included the insertion of a large inglenook fireplace into the former open hall, with a new location for the cross passage at the back of the stack. This central fireplace has a stone-built angle with an unusual re-used beam, which has an embattled type cresting above and cavetto/roll moulding below. The beam is obviously re-used because it has an original moulding mitre, now cut off, to the left end. The lower part of the moulding has also been cut away in the centre. The beam is clearly from a high quality building, probably of late 15<sup>th</sup> century date, presumably taken from some part of the Bishop's Palace after it became the Bedehouse in 1600. Although the ground floor fireplace is built of stone, the upper part was a timber chimney, built with main timbers of squared oak, lesser timber of ash pole and mud infill daub on laths. Parts of this timber chimney survive in the roof space beside the central cruck truss, with heavy sooting to the inside walls. The timber chimney was in use until replaced by the current brick stack around the 1960s-70s.

A first floor structure was clearly inserted in the earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century into the central ground floor room, which had until then been a hall open to the roof. There is a central spine beam and two wallplate beams to north and south, all with chamfers and ogee stops. The use of such wallplates to carry first floor joists is a characteristic sign of an inserted floor. It also tends to confirm that the stone walls pre-date the 17<sup>th</sup> century alterations.

A stone crosswall and chimneystack were also inserted to the east, replacing the former cruck truss here, and creating a heated parlour. There is a chamfered spine beam, without stops. The fireplace is of unusual type, fairly small (890mm wide by 980mm high) with odd, cyma and ovolo-moulded jambs. It may have been altered later, or make use of re-used stone. The upper chimneybreast also has some large

ironstone blocks and corbels across to exit just to one side of the roof ridge. As noted above, though, the top of the external chimneystack is of typical 17<sup>th</sup> century form.

On the first floor, there is another rather odd fireplace in the east gable wall. This is a small fireplace opening with square jambs and head, the lintel with an unusual joggled joint, and an oak lintel above. It would seem to be of 18<sup>th</sup> century date, providing heating to the bedchamber. In the roof space above, the chimneystack is built into the wall thickness and then corbels out below the ridge, all the masonry being built in clay mortar.

## **Site**

The house is aligned with, but set considerably back from, Church Lane. This could suggest that Church Lane was much wider in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but was built up with infill in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Fronting onto Church Lane is a good ironstone barn of two bay size. It has large opposed doorways, offset towards the west, with the main storage space to the east. The storage section has two ventilation slits in both the north and south walls. In the east gable is a high hatch/window opening, with a pattern of triangular and square recesses in the wall below. The floor has large irregular ironstone paving to the east, an unusual survival, and old brick flooring to the entrance. The roof structure is of late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century date with a covering of Welsh slate, and there are no gable parapets or kneelers to indicate the original roof pitch. The barn probably dates from the later 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

OS maps of 1886 and 1904 indicate that there was formerly a building which connected the north-east end of the house to the barn, but there is now no indication of this.

Nick Hill  
Rose Cottage, Bringhurst

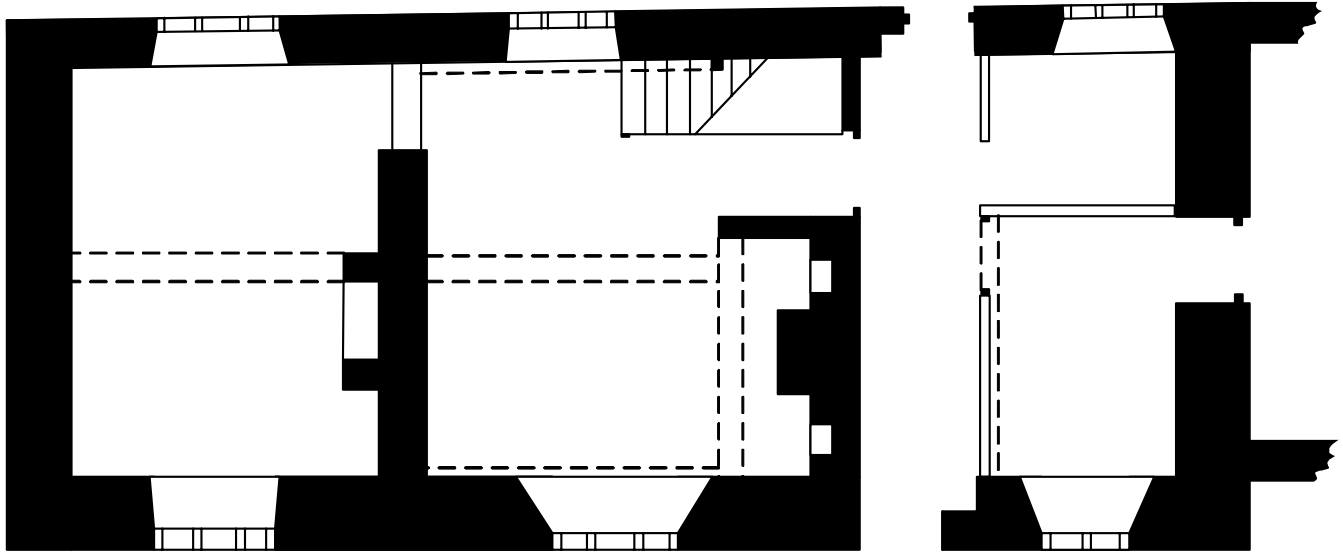
18<sup>th</sup> October 2007

Report  
North

North

(SECTION)

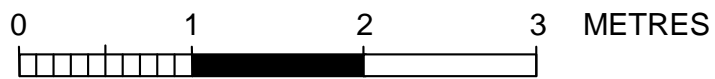
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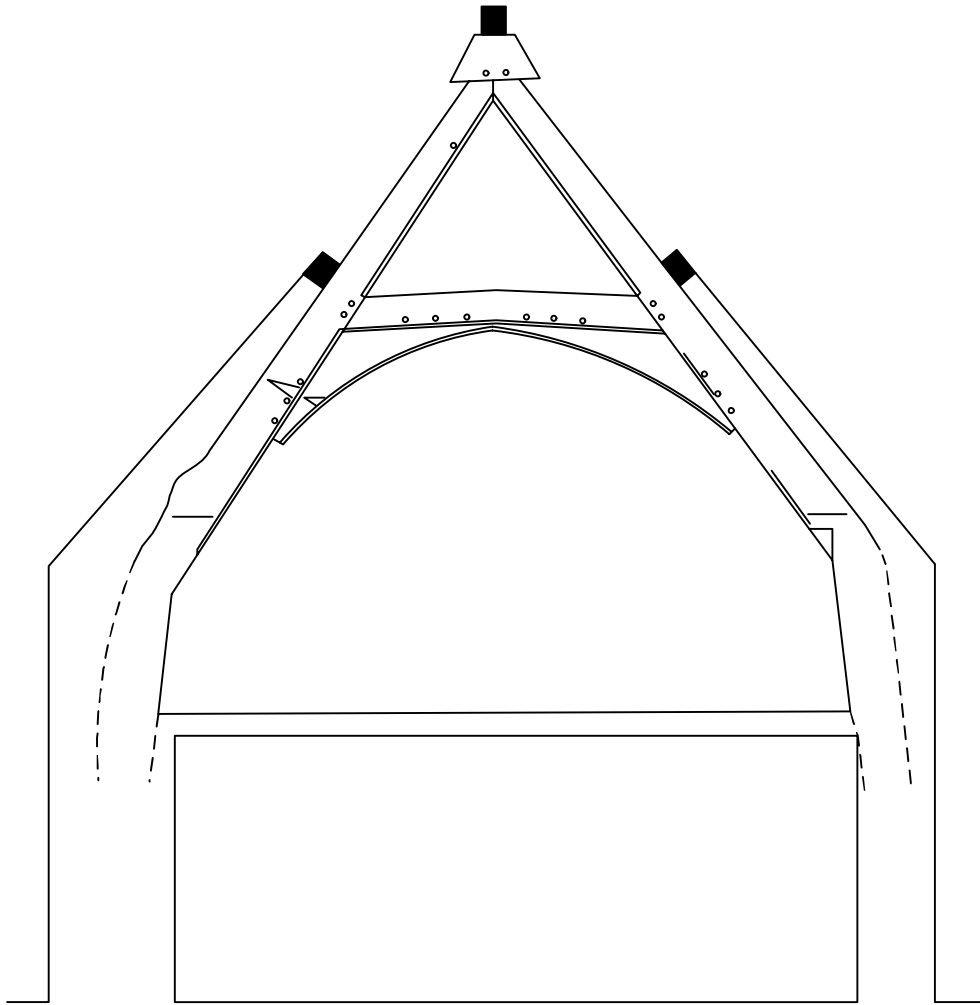
GROUND FLOOR

A

4, CHURCH LANE, LYDDINGTON



NH / RO February 2012

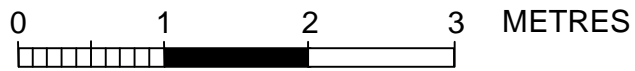


A

Section on A – A1

A1

4, CHURCH LANE, LYDDINGTON



NH / RO February 2012





View of the north front



View of the rear from the south



The cruck truss

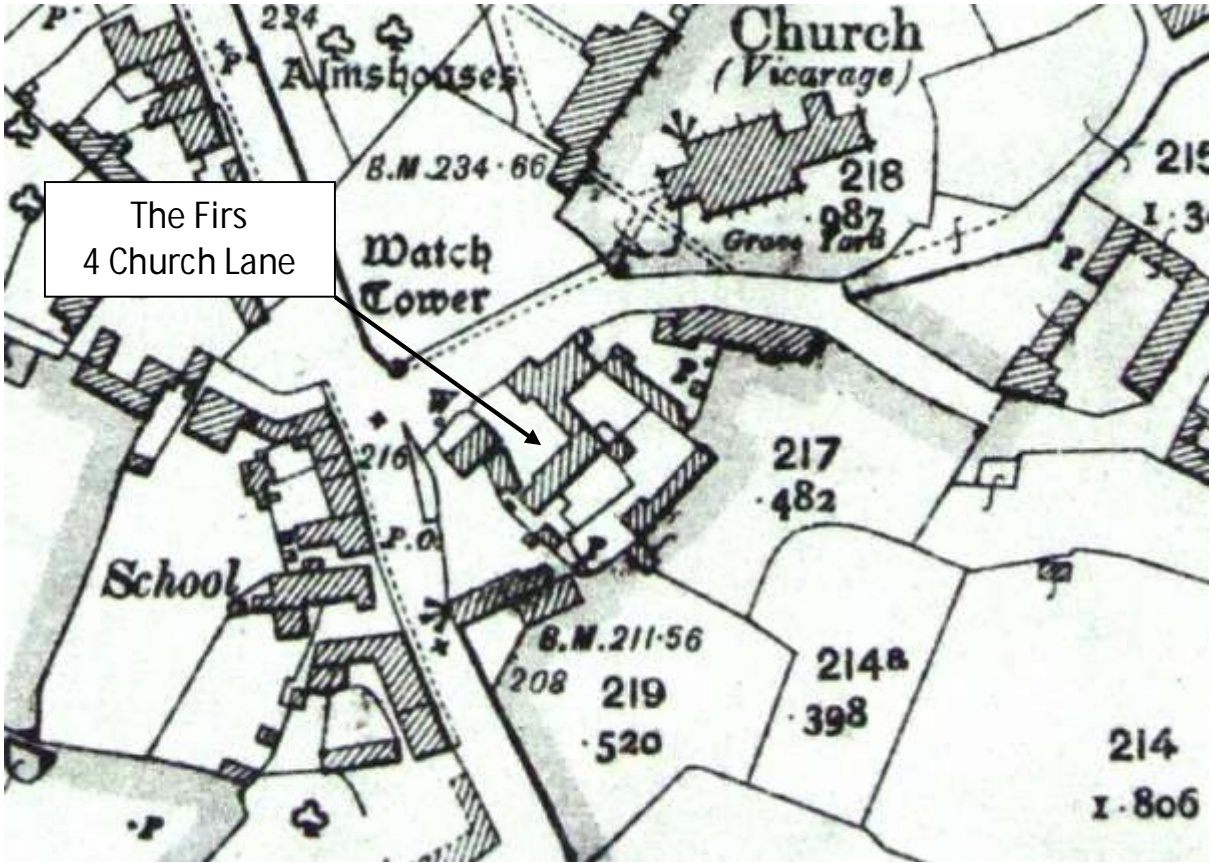


The apex of the cruck truss, with smoke-blackening



The inglenook fireplace with re-used embattled beam





Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, 1904